

COLLEGE BASICS 101

Frequently Asked Questions by new college students -

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What should I do first? Pursuing educational goals is a process that requires many decisions along the way and sometimes a change in the direction you wish to go. It is important to see your advisor early and come prepared. Consider these questions and review tips before your appointment. Write down specific questions. Your advisor will provide guidance with identifying goals and preparing a plan. They will review tuition assistance procedures and provide details about the CLEP & DANTES examination program. Most of all, they will answer your questions. Listen attentively and if you need clarification, ask. This shows you value both your time and the counselor's time. Take notes to remember what is important. Short-term goals are generally best. Don't hesitate to ask questions of experienced college students. They will appreciate the interest and be reminded of how they felt as a brand new college student.

call 247-2348 to schedule a counseling appointment

Which classes should I take first? It is often recommended to take general education courses before launching into a long-term program. Excellent initial courses include English, Speech, College Algebra, Humanities and Social Science. *These courses are often needed for most degrees at most colleges.* Students should be careful about declaring a college major too quickly. Delaying this decision gives time to learn about your personality, aptitude and interests. So many different opportunities exist today. It can be overwhelming to find just the right program.

How will I know I'm choosing the right classes for me? Keep your program/degree plan handy. It's required for requesting tuition assistance. It identifies which classes you need. You may add completed classes to it as you go along. This will keep you on track and demonstrate responsibility for your education. When nearing program completion contact your advisor to confirm completion status and discuss your next goal. If you wish to deviate from the course/program plan get approval from your advisor.

How does tuition assistance (TA) & financial aid work? TA for active duty may pay up to 100% for qualified courses within your degree plan. It is essential that you understand the financial commitment you are making. Tuition Reimbursement is collected through payroll reduction for classes not completed successfully. the process includes: 1) choose the school and class/es, 2) pre-register with school and bring all documentation needed for AF 1227, 3) apply for TA 1-3 weeks before class starts, 4) complete registration, 5) purchase textbook, 6) attend class and finally, 7) bring printed grades to the education office. Just repeat steps 2-7 each term. For other financial aid sources, browse the links under "**financial aid**" on our website above. Many are suitable for both military and family members.

How do I get a degree plan so TA can be issued? Airmen with little or no college are strongly advised to complete their CCAF degree before selecting another program. Your CCAF degree plan is already on file. See "**ccaf**" on our website above for more information. For other college degree programs, you must provide a degree plan that lists courses you need. Otherwise, TA cannot be issued.

TIPS for the Successful College Student

- Keep your college catalog as your ultimate guidebook & future reference. Pay attention to the academic standards, withdrawal/refund policy and the students' rights and responsibilities. Don't take policy advice from other students. Check with the school officials.
- Register early and plan an alternate class. The class you most want may be filled or cancelled. Select classes based on degree plan and your academic capabilities. Don't overload yourself.
- Class attendance affects your grade. Attend all classes and be on time. Walking in late distracts others. Sit near the front of the class to minimize distractions.
- Read the instructor's syllabus. It shows exactly what your instructor expects. Read what you are given! Avid readers grasp material more easily.
- Show appreciation to the instructor for good teaching. Provide helpful feedback. Don't be afraid to ask for help. If something is unclear, pleasantly ask for clarification.
- Participate in class. Be attentive & responsive in class discussions. Yet don't monopolize conversations either. Your body language is important. Instructors are motivated by students' attention.
- Turn in assignments on time. Don't say it with flowers, say it with papers!
- If your opinion differs from others, talk about it diplomatically. Value the views of others; it doesn't mean you have to agree. Differences will enhance learning for both of you. Trying to prove that your instructor and fellow students know less than you is wasting everyone's time.
- Be accountable for your choices, avoid making excuses and apologize when you should.
- Be diplomatic, pleasant, and willing to go the extra mile. This is to your benefit always, but is especially valuable if you're trying to salvage a bad grade. Offer to make up exams, write an extra paper or redo a project.
- College is not a contest. You don't have to compete with anyone else for your grade. Learn at your own pace in your own learning style.
- Pay attention to deadlines! Be sure to have a university or college representative sign every form dealing with course selection, dropping classes, etc.
- Be a good listener. Focus and concentrate on the main points of the lecture. Get them down on paper in a clear and concise way. Your listening skills, note taking and study skills will determine your success in college! If you have difficulty listening and writing simultaneously, ask the instructor if you can use a small recorder so you can review details later.
- Immediately after a lecture, make a mental review of your notes and then compare them with your written notes. This will aid your memory. You may benefit from rewriting your notes in narrative form to help maintain what you have learned.
- Do not study too long in one sitting. If your attention span is short take frequent breaks. Get adequate rest & exercise. Eat well and take time to play. Avoiding study when you are exhausted or overly stressed.
- Try to study during daylight hours. Natural light is more conducive to learning. Try the 30-3-2 schedule. . Study for 30 minutes. Take a 3-minute break to think of other things. Upon returning, take 2 minutes to mentally review what you've just read and do a quick preview of what's coming up next. **STUDY – BREAK – REVIEW – PREVIEW – STUDY**
- Actively try to make friends. Support systems are essential. Look for common ground. Talk to other students to find out the real scoop.
- Save every grade report and academic record. Computers have been known to lose grades, courses, credits, etc. Keep your source document!
- Maintain a positive attitude. It is the key to realizing your dreams and ambitions!